

is agreement to pursue enhanced trilateral cooperation as a matter of priority. On that basis, a framework for trilateral cooperation should be developed for approval at a future summit, and progress in its implementation should thereafter be reviewed systematically at each summit meeting. The expert panel that we have recommended be established to advise on the future of North American partnership could also be tasked with providing an assessment of policy sectors that show the greatest potential for strengthened trilateral cooperation.

The Government recognizes the importance of frequent meetings with American and Mexican counterparts at all levels. Since 2001, the three North American leaders have met trilaterally twice. Contacts between trade, labour and environmental ministers are regular and formally established within the NAFTA framework. There are also regular trilateral meetings of Finance ministers and Central Bank heads. The Government encourages its ministers and officials to think and consult trilaterally whenever it can best serve Canada's interests.

The Government believes that it is more efficient for ministers and officials to explore possible areas for trilateral cooperation within their areas of competence than for leaders to undertake this task. The Government will actively pursue any opportunities for enhanced trilateral cooperation that emerge from these discussions, where appropriate to our interests.

We must also utilize to their full potential the trilateral institutions and mechanisms which now exist under the auspices of the NAFTA and outside of the Agreement. Canadian senior officials are working with their Mexican and American counterparts to this end. For instance, the NAALC Working Group on Occupational Health and Safety is a new forum for officials to share expertise and make recommendations to ministers in this important area. Similarly, the formation of the senior officials-level North American Energy Working Group provides an excellent starting point for discussions on trilateral energy cooperation.

Recommendation 37

Consideration should be given to the following Canadian initiatives aimed at strengthening parliamentary cooperation on a North America basis:

- *The leadership of Canada's Parliament should, in the first instance, encourage interaction between Canada-US and Canada-Mexico inter-parliamentary activities and encourage their consideration of the possibility of holding some joint meetings. Beyond that, Canadian parliamentary leaders should approach their counterparts in the United States and Mexico about the prospect of*

